

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 SEOUL 03790 01 OF 02 140204Z

63

ACTION SPM-01

INFO OCT-01 EA-11 ISO-00 AID-20 USIA-15 HEW-08 CIAE-00

INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 AGR-20 SWF-02 EB-11 COME-00

OMB-01 TRSE-00 IO-14 SIL-01 LAB-06 DRC-01 /123 W

----- 019110

R 140027Z JUN 74

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4300

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SEOUL 3790

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SPOP

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF POPULATION POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

REFERENCE: STATE 112325

COMMENTS ARE NUMBERED TO CORRESPOND TO REFTEL:

A(1): A HIGHER RATHER THAN A LOWER BIRTH RATE IN SOUTH KOREA WILL AGGRAVATE THREE INTERRELATED LONG-TERM PROBLEMS AFFECTING THE FUTURE QUALITY OF LIFE AND/OR ECONOMIC GROWTH IN THIS COUNTRY: (I) KOREA ALREADY HAS A VERY HIGH POPULATION DENSITY IN TERMS OF ARABLE LAND; (II) IT HAS ALREADY EXPERIENCED VERY RAPID URBANIZATION, DUE TO INDUSTRIALIZATION AND LIMITED HIGH PRODUCTIVITY RURAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES, CREATING RURAL/URBAN PROBLEMS WHICH THE GOVERNMENT HAS RECOGNIZED AND IS ATTEMPTING TO DEAL WITH; AND (III) THE HIGH OVERALL AND URBAN POPULATION DENSITIES, COMBINED WITH THE VERY RAPID INDUSTRIALIZATION, HAVE CREATED POLLUTION AND OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS WHICH THREATEN TO BECOME MUCH WORSE WITH INCREASING INDUSTRIALIZATION (WHICH WILL EMPHASIZE HEAVY AND CHEMICAL INDUSTRY) AND MASS CONSUMPTION (E.G., OF AUTOMOTIVE TRANSPORTATION). HOWEVER, INVESTMENT IN KOREA'S INDUSTRIALIZATION HAS BEEN IN RELATIVELY LABOR INTENSIVE ENTERPRISES. THUS, THE ECONOMY HAS BEEN SUBSTANTIALLY SUCCESSFUL IN ABSORBING OFF-FARM MIGRANTS. THE GENERAL EXPECTATION IS THAT KOREA WILL CONTINUE ITS RAPID GROWTH BASED ON INDUSTRIALIZATION AND CONTINUED ABSORPTION

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PAGE 02 SEOUL 03790 01 OF 02 140204Z

OF THE UNEMPLOYED AND UNDEREMPLOYED INTO MORE PRODUCTIVE, FULL-

TIME EMPLOYMENT IN INDUSTRY OR RELATED MODERN SERVICES. BECAUSE OF ITS PAST RECORD, PRESENT EXPANDED BASE AND INHERENT ADVANTAGES (INCLUDING CAPABLE, FLEXIBLE ECONOMIC MANAGEMENT), KOREA IS EXPECTED TO DO REASONABLY WELL COMPARED TO OTHER LDC'S, IN THE NEXT DECADE. HOWEVER, GIVEN THE CURRENT HIGH DENSITY, CONTINUED HIGH POPULATION GROWTH WILL EVENTUALLY BE EXPECTED TO CREATE PRESSURES, POSSIBLY BY MID 1980, BEYOND THE ECONOMY'S CAPACITY TO ABSORB AND SUSTAIN.

A(2): FOR THE PRESENT AND FORSEEABLE FUTURE, KOREA WILL CONTINUE TO REQUIRE LARGE IMPORTS OF GRAINS, ESPECIALLY WHEAT, RICE, CORN AND BARLEY. THE MAJOR CONSIDERATION IS ASSURING THE AVAILABILITY OF NECESSARY GRAINS, PRINCIPALLY A US SUPPLY PROBLEM, AND THE RELATED PROBLEM OF THE ROKG'S ABILITY TO FINANCE MAJOR PORTIONS OF THESE IMPORTS FROM ITS OWN EXPORT EARNINGS. WITH THE PHASE-DOWN IN PL 480 AND IN VIEW OF OVERALL PRICE INCREASES OF AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES, THE FOREIGN EXCHANGE REQUIREMENT FOR GRAIN AND RAW COTTON HAS GROWN TO UNPRECEDENTED LEVELS. IT IS ESTIMATED TO BE ABOUT DOLS. ONE BILLION FOR CY 1974. FOR THE MEDIUM TERM, WITH POPULATION EXPANSION BEING REFLECTED BY INCREASED URBANIZATION AND SOPHISTICATION, ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR US TRADE AND INVESTMENT WOULD EMERGE IF RESTRICTIONS ON CONSUMER GOODS IMPORTS ARE REMOVED AND ANTICIPATED PER CAPITA INCOME INCREASES MATERIALIZE. IN THE LONG TERM, CONTINUED POPULATION PRESSURES COULD WELL DIMINISH ATTRACTIVENESS OF EXTERNAL INVESTMENT AS KOREA'S ECONOMY BECOMES MORE DEPENDENT ON EXTERNAL SOURCES OF RAW MATERIALS AND FOOD NEEDED TO MAINTAIN A SIGNIFICANTLY GREATER LABOR FORCE, HENCE KOREA'S EXPORT INDUSTRY BECOMES MORE VULNERABLE TO FLUCTUATIONS IN AVAILABILITY AND COST OF THESE COMMODITIES.

A(3): THERE IS NO EVIDENCE TO INDICATE THAT POPULATION FACTORS IN THE ROKG WILL ADVERSELY AFFECT THE DOMESTIC SITUATION OR INTERNATIONAL POLICY SO AS TO BE OF CONCERN TO THE US IN THE FORSEEABLE FUTURE.

B (1) AND (2): AN ABUNDANCE OF YOUNG, CHEAP LABOR HAS BEEN AN IMPORTANT FACTOR IN KOREA'S ECONOMIC GROWTH TO DATE, AND MOST KOREAN ECONOMISTS VIEW THE PRESENT INCREASE OF LABOR FORCE ENTRANTS AS A POSITIVE FACTOR ASSURING CONTINUED RAPID GROWTH BASED ON ABUNDANT CHEAP LABOR. SOME ECONOMISTS, HOWEVER, WORRY ABOUT THE ADDITIONAL LABOR ABSORPTION PROBLEMS THAT MAY OCCUR IF

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 SEOUL 03790 01 OF 02 140204Z

FUTURE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES OPERATE ADVERSELY AGAINST KOREA. MOST ECONOMISTS WILL ADMIT TO SOME CONCERN OVER KOREA'S LONG-TERM PROBLEMS OF HIGH POPULATION DENSITY AND CONTINUED INDUSTRIALIZATION WITHOUT ENVIRONMENTAL DETERIORATION. ONLY IF IT CAN BE PROVEN THAT THE LARGE POPULATION AND HIGH POPULATION DENSITY WILL BE DETRIMENTAL TO KOREA'S FUTURE WILL THE DECISION MAKERS BECOME SERIOUSLY INTERESTED IN WHAT THEY NOW GENERALLY VIEW AS A NON-PROBLEM, AND CURRENTLY THIS PROPOSITION IS PROBABLY NOT

PROVABLE IN THE LOCAL ENVIRONMENT. THE MAJOR OBSTACLES TO INCREAS-
 ING RECOGNITION BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES OF THE DANGER OF THE POPULAT-
 ION PROBLEM THEN LIES PREDOMINANTLY IN THE PREOCCUPATION WITH
 ECONOMIC GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT, AND THE RECOGNITION OF THE
 CRITICAL NATURE OF YOUNG LABOR IN THOSE PROCESSES. TO SOME DEGREE,
 OF COURSE, THIS REFLECTS THE NEED OF AN EMERGING AGGRESSIVE
 DEVELOPING NATION, WITH LIMITED RESOURCES, TO PLACE PRIORITY ON
 PROGRAMS THAT YIELD IMMEDIATE OBSERVABLE RESULTS AND THUS CREATE
 THE PRODUCTIVE BASE WHICH WILL ASSURE SUCH A NATION THE FINANCIAL
 RESOURCES THAT WILL THEN ALLOW ADEQUATE ATTENTION BEING GIVEN
 OTHER PRIORITIES. ACCORDINGLY, IT IS SUGGESTED THAT INCREASED
 ATTENTION BE DIRECTED TO INFLUENCING THE SENIOR DECISION MAKERS IN
 COUNTRIES SUCH AS KOREA, WHERE A TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION WITH THE
 POPULATION PROBLEM HAS BEEN REALIZED, SO THAT THEY WILL DEVELOP
 POSITIVE PROGRAMS AND POLICIES NOW THAT WILL PREVENT EVENTUAL
 DETERIORATION OF THEIR SOCIETIES FROM EXCESSIVE POPULATION. THIS
 ATTENTION WOULD ENCOMPASS: (I) PARTICIPATION BY THESE DECISION
 MAKERS IN INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS AT ASSURING MAXIMUM DISSEMINATION
 OF WORLD-WIDE FOOD PRODUCTION INFORMATION AND THE COORDINATION AND
 SUPPORT OF FOOD PRODUCTION IN THEIR REGIONS; (II) THEIR EXPOSURE
 ON A PRIORITY BASIS, THROUGH SPONSORSHIP BY REGIONAL AND INTERNAT-
 IONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS, TO THOSE EXAMPLES OF IMBALANCED
 RESOURCES/POPULATION SITUATIONS WHICH HAVE REACHED THE CRISIS
 STATUS, E.G. BANGLADESH; (III) THEIR EXPOSURE TO EXAMPLES OF
 THOSE NATIONS WHICH PREVIOUSLY HAD SERIOUS PROBLEMS AND HAVE NOW
 SUCCESSFULLY ACHIEVED A BALANCE BETWEEN POPULATION AND RESOURCES;
 (IV) DEVELOPING AN INTERNATIONAL RANKING OF NATIONS BY THEIR RELA-
 TIVE PROFICIENCY IN MAINTAINING PROGRAMS CONTROLLING POPULATION IN
 CONSONANCE WITH RESOURCES AVAILABLE AND UTILIZED, AND USING THIS
 RANKING AS A CRITERIA IN GUIDING APPLICATION OF EXTERNAL
 ASSISTANCE.

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PAGE 01 SEOUL 03790 02 OF 02 140225Z

63

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OMB-01 TRSE-00 IO-14 SIL-01 LAB-06 DRC-01 /123 W

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R 140027Z JUN 74

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4301

C O N F I D E N T I A L FINAL SECTION OF 2 SEOUL 3790

B(3): MEANS OF INCREASING ACCEPTANCE OF FAMILY PLANNING BY LOCAL
ST
IETIES HAS BEEN THE SUBJECT OF NUMEROUS STUDIES, SURVEYS, ETC.
OBVIOUSLY, SUCH A COMPLEX PROBLEM CANNOT BE READILY RESOVLED. IT
STILL APPEARS THAT THIS ASPECT OF THE MAJOR OBJECTIVE OF A REDUCED
POPULATION GROWTH MUST EMPHASIZE EDUCATION, ESPECIALLY OF THE
YOUNG, THE NEWLY MARRIED, AND AS SUGGESTED IN B (1) AND (2) ABOVE,
THE TOP POLICY MAKERS AND ADMINISTRATORS WHERE SUCH CENTRAL AUTH-
ORITIES COULD SIGNIFICANTLY INFLUENCE FP DECISIONS IF SO MOTIVAT-
ED. GREATER PRIVATE SECTOR PARTICIPATION IN THE FAMILY PLANNING
EFFORT, ALONG WITH A "CAFETERIA" APPROACH TO THE DELIVERY OF
SERVICES WHICH ALLOWS THE FAMILY PLANNING PRACTITIONERS TO CHOOSE
THOSE METHODS MOST ACCEPTABLE TO THEMSELVES, OFFERS GOOD POSSIBIL-
ITIES FOR INFLUENCING NEW AND EXISTING ACCEPTORS. IMPORTANT OTHER
POSSIBILITIES INCLUDE ENCOURAGING PEER GROUP ACCEPTANCE OF FAMILY
PLANNING AS A WAY OF LIFE, AND A HEALTH FACTOR APPROACH, INTER-
RELATING ENHANCED QUALITY OF LIFE WITH SMALLER FAMILIES AND MORE
READILY AVAILABLE HEALTH SERVICES.

C(1): THE KOREAN FP EXPERIENCE HAS BEEN A BACKGROUND SOURCE FOR
A NUMBER OF STUDIES SEEKING MEANS OF IMPROVING USEFULNESS OF USFP
ASSISTANCE. CONSEQUENTLY, OUR OBSERVATION ON THE SUBJECT MAY HAVE
BEEN REVIEWED AND DISCARDED ALREADY AS BEING INAPPROPRIATE FOR
BROADER APPLICATION. NOTWITHSTANDING THAT POSSIBILITY, THE
FOLLOWING SUGGESTIONS MAY MERIT CONSIDERATION: (I) CONCENTRATE
AVAILABLE BILATERAL RESOURCES ON A FEW COUNTRIES HAVING MAJOR
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PAGE 02 SEOUL 03790 02 OF 02 140225Z

POPULATION PROBLEMS, WHERE A BREAKTHROUGH WOULD HAVE SIGNIFICANT
IMPACT ON SCARCE FOOD RESOURCES AND WHERE THE US HAS PROVEN
INFLUENCE; (II) CONVERSELY, SEEK A LESSENING OF PROLIFERATION,
ELIMINATING MARGINAL IMPACT COUNTRIES, BEING CRITICALLY SELECTIVE
IN USE OF IMPLEMENTING AGENTS AND PROBLEMS TO BE RESEARCHED; (III)
DEVELOP A RESULTS-ORIENTED EVALUATION AND DATE FEEDBACK AND UTIL-
IZATION SYSTEM FOR INDIVIDUAL PROGRAMS. (IV) IN THOSE COUNTRIES
SELECTED FOR CONCENTRATION, INTERGRATE FP ASSISTANCE INTO EXISTING
ORGANIZATIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS, SEEKING MAXIMUM
UTILIZATION OF THE COUNTRY'S EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM, ITS HEALTH
SERIVCES AND ESPECIALLY ITS PRIVATE SECTOR; (V) DEVELOP MEANS
OF INDUCING ALL USG AGENCIES AND US PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS EXTEND-
ING ASSISTANCE TO COUNTRIES WITH SIGNIFICANT FP PROBLEMS TO
BROADEN THEIR IMPACT OF FP, INCLUDING SUPPORT OF MEASURES FOR
INFLUENCING DECISION MAKERS PARA B(1) AND (2) ABOVE.

C(2): INDUCE UN TO TAKE LEADERSHIP IN FORMULATION AND CARRYING
OUT A PROGRAM TO INFLUENCE DECISION MAKERS IN THE POPULATION

PROBLEM COUNTRIES ALONG LINES SUGGESTED IN B(1) AND (2) ABOVE.
SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE POPULATION CONTROL PROFICIENCY
RANKING SYSTEM BY THE UN AND INFLUENCE THE INTERNATIONAL LENDING
AGENCIES TO UTILIZE THE RANKING AS BASIS FOR CONDITIONING LOAN
ASSISTANCE. SUPPORT COORDINATED COUNTRY PLANNING APPROACH IN
APPLYING FP ASSISTANCE WITH RESPONSIBILITIES CENTERED IN THE
RECIPIENT COUNTRIES.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, LESS DEVELOPED COUNTRIES, FAMILY PLANNING, PROGRAMS (PROJECTS), POPULATION MOVEMENTS, URBAN POPULATION, COUNTRY TEAM
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 JUN 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: izenbei0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974SEOUL03790
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740154-0208
From: SEOUL
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740644/aaaablgw.tel
Line Count: 231
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SPM
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: STATE 112325
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: izenbei0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 AUG 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <06-Aug-2002 by kelleyw0>; APPROVED <19 FEB 2003 by izenbei0>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: REVIEW OF POPULATION POLICIES AND PROGRAMS
TAGS: SPOP, ECON, US, KS
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005